STARLIN · COCKRUM · DECARLO
BATMAN
75¢
423
SEPT. 88
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
MCFARLANE
DC COMICS AREN'T JUST FOR KIDS!

YOU SHOULDA SEEN HIM...
... HE COULDN'T HAVE BEEN MORE THAN 19 AND HE'D ALREADY DECIDED LIFE WASN'T WORTH LIVING.
IT WAS ON THE GOTHAM-BORO BRIDGE. THE CALL CAME DOWN TO EMERGENCY SERVICES ABOUT 2:45 A.M.
ALL I COULD GET OUT OF HIM WAS THAT HIS NAME WAS KENNY AND HE HAD A HEROIN HABIT HE COULDN'T BEAT.
THAT'S THE REASON WHY HE WAS PLANNING TO CHECK OUT.

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CREATED BY BOB KANE

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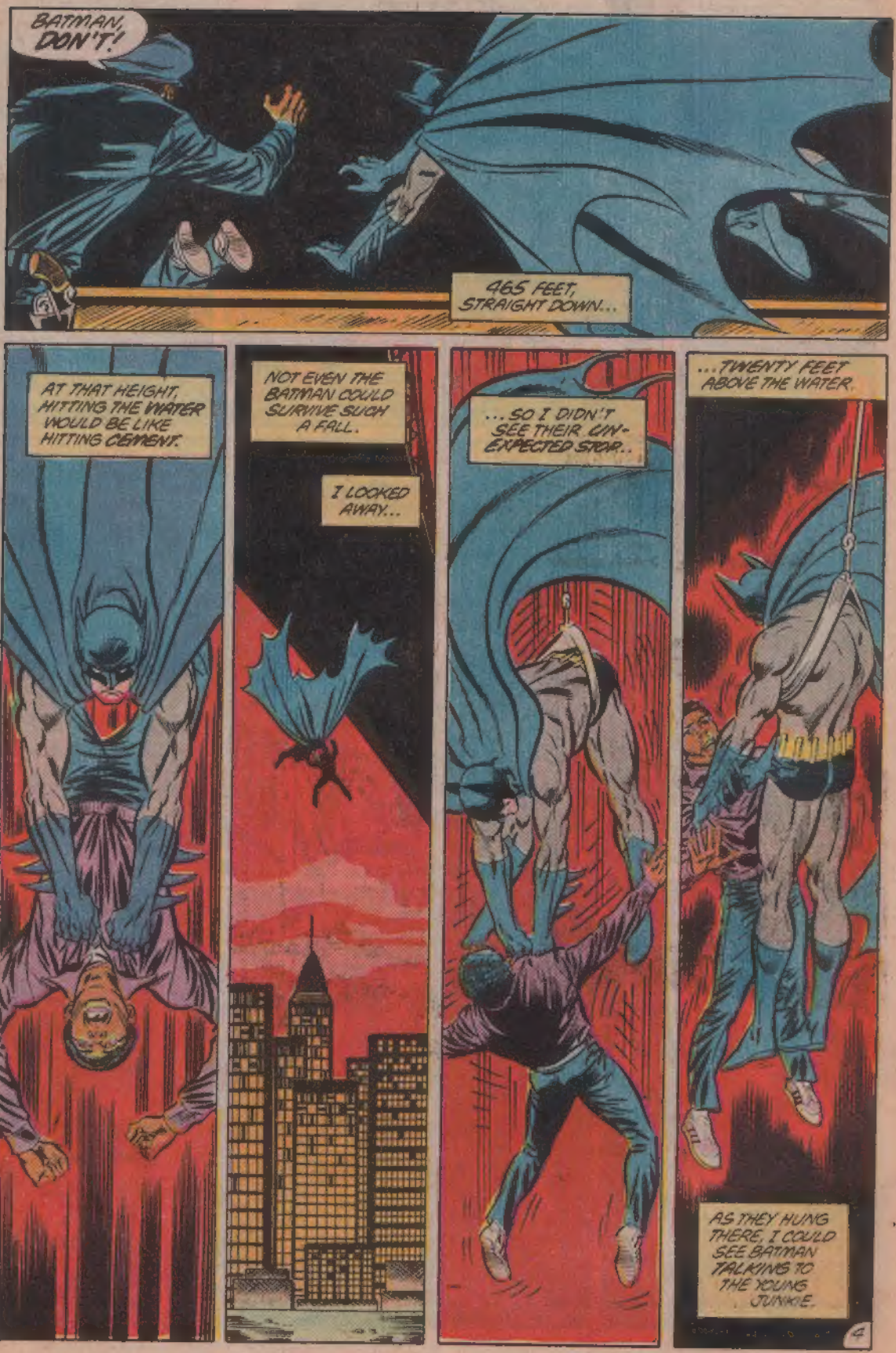
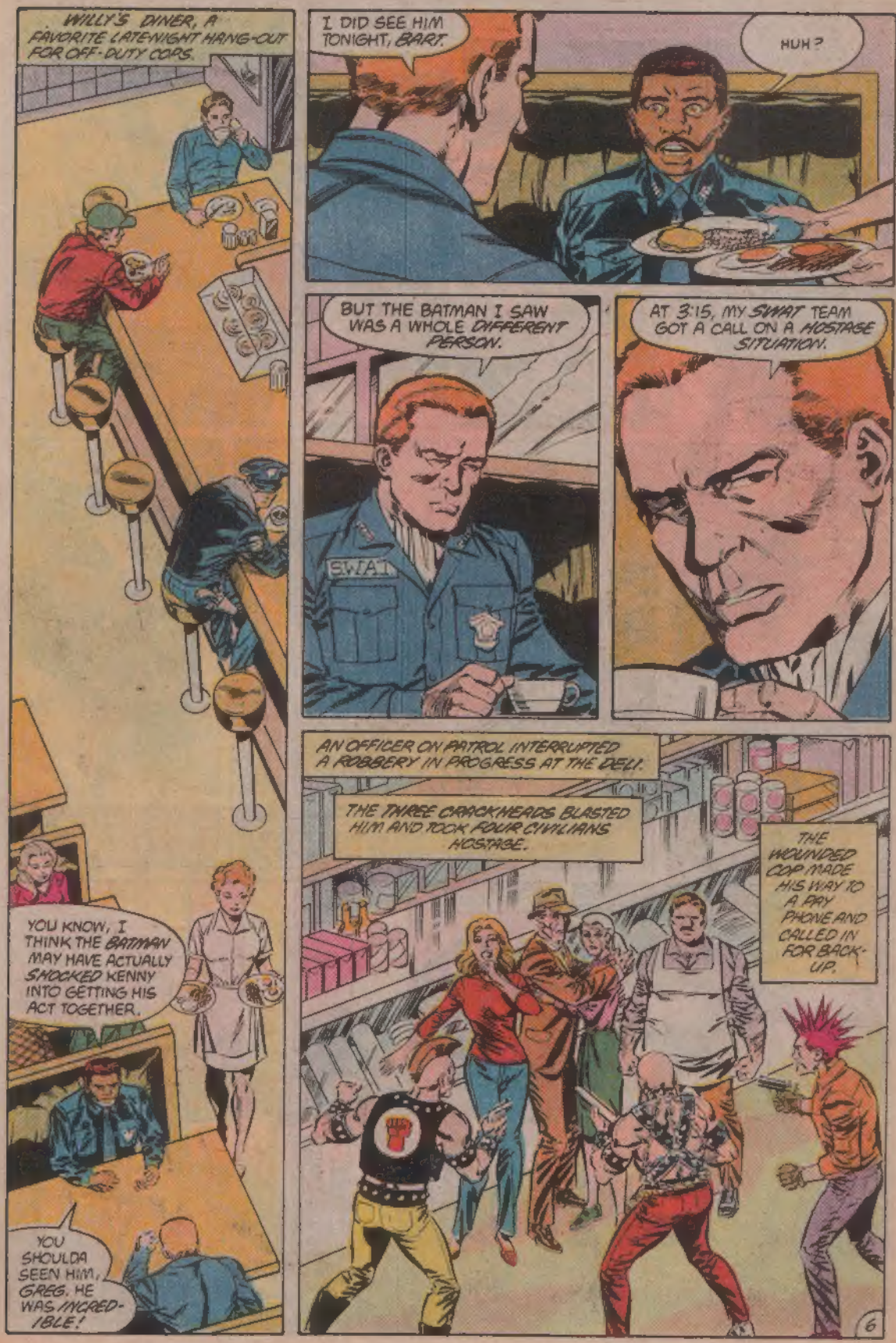
THIRD PRINTING

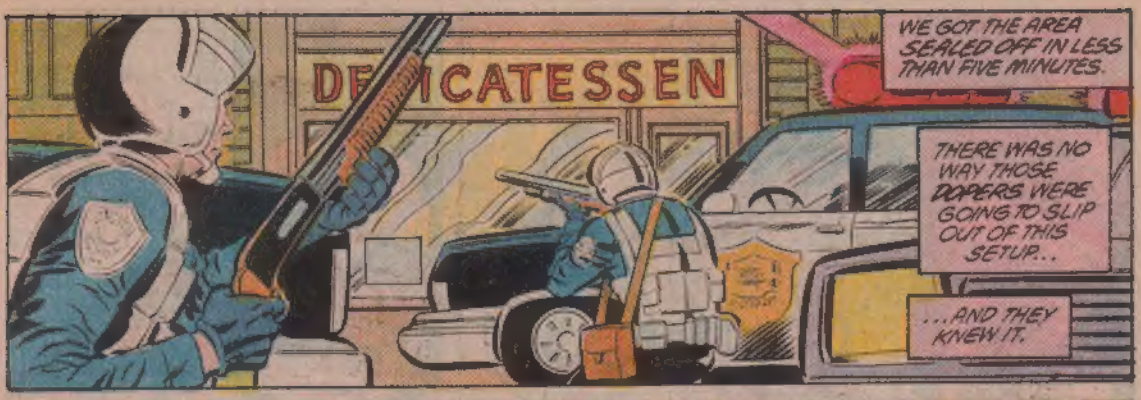
KENNY WAS GOING TO TAKE THAT BIG STEP OFF INTO INFINITY...
...965 FEET STRAIGHT DOWN INTO THE ICE-COLD WATERS OF GOTHAM RIVER.
'COURSE, YOU KNOW, IT'S MY JOB TO TALK POOR JERKS LIKE KENNY OUT OF DOING THEMSELVES IN.
UNFORTUNATELY, KENNY WASN'T BUYING ANY OF WHAT I HAD TO SELL.
ALL HE WANTED TO DO WAS ESCAPE FROM THE MESS THAT DOPE HAD MADE OF HIS LIFE.
I GAVE IT ALL I HAD.
BUT I KNEW IT WASN'T ENOUGH. I WAS LOSING HIM.
THAT'S WHEN THE BATMAN SHOWED UP. IT WAS LIKE HE POPPED OUT OF NOWHERE.
SO THIS IS THE YOUNG FOOL WHO WANTS TO END HIS OWN LIFE...
STAY BACK!

DON'T TOUCH ME!
I'LL JUMP!
THAT WOULD BE A BIG MISTAKE.
LOT YOU KNOW, SUCKER! I AIN'T GOT SQUAT TO LIVE FOR!
I'D BE A LOT BETTER OFF DEAD!
YOU'RE NEVER BETTER OFF DEAD.
YOU MISS ALL THE POSSIBILITIES THAT WAY.
WHAT POSSIBILITIES, MAN?
THE CHANCES TO START A NEW AND BETTER LIFE.
LISTEN MAN, I'M POOR AND I'M BLACK...
...I GOT A JONES I CAN'T SHAKE...
...GOT NO FAMILY.. NO JOB..NO FUTURE...
...AIN'T NO BETTER LIFE WAITING FOR ME.
NO!
3


BATMAN, DON'T!
465 FEET, STRAIGHT DOWN...
AT THAT HEIGHT, HITTING THE WATER WOULD BE LIKE HITTING CEMENT.
NOT EVEN THE BATMAN COULD SURVIVE SUCH A FALL.
I LOOKED AWAY...
...SO I DIDN'T SEE THEIR UN-EXPECTED STOP..
...TWENTY FEET ABOVE THE WATER.
AS THEY HUNG THERE, I COULD SEE BATMAN TALKING TO THE YOUNG JUNKIE.
4

I COULDN'T HEAR WHAT HE WAS SAYING, BUT I ASKED KENNY ABOUT IT LATER.
THAT WAS REAL STUPID, KENNY.
YOU THREW YOUR LIFE AWAY! WASTED IT!
BY ALL RIGHTS YOU SHOULD BE DEAD NOW!
BUT YOU'RE NOT! YOU GOT ANOTHER CHANCE.
IT'S TIME TO START OVER, KENNY.
GET ON A DRUG REHAB PROGRAM!
CLEAN UP YOUR BODY AND YOUR LIFE!
QUIT LOOKING FOR EXCUSES TO FAIL!
YOU'VE GOT AS GOOD A SHOT AT LIFE AS ANYONE!
THINK ABOUT IT!
THEN BATMAN GRAPPLED HIMSELF, SWUNG OVER TO THE BRIDGE, AND DISAPPEARED INTO THE FRAMEWORK BEFORE ANYONE GOT A CHANCE TO THANK HIM.
5:47 AM--
DINER
5

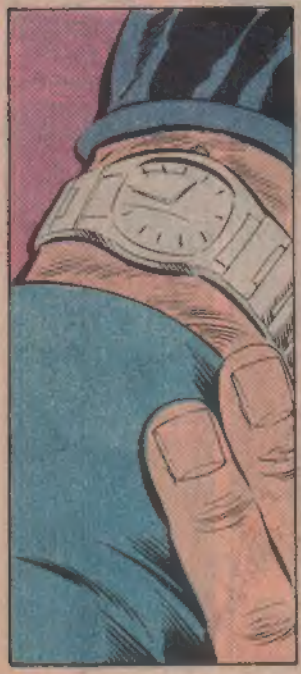

WILLY'S DINER, A FAVORITE LATE-NIGHT HANG-OUT FOR OFF-DUTY COPS.
I DID SEE HIM TONIGHT, BART.
HUH?
BUT THE BATMAN I SAW WAS A WHOLE DIFFERENT PERSON.
S.W.A.T.
AT 3:15, MY SWAT TEAM GOT A CALL ON A HOSTAGE SITUATION.
AN OFFICER ON PATROL INTERRUPTED A ROBBERY IN PROGRESS AT THE DELI.
THE THREE CRACKHEADS BLASTED HIM AND TOOK FOUR CIVILIANS HOSTAGE.
THE WOUNDED COP MADE HIS WAY TO A PAY PHONE AND CALLED IN FOR BACK-UP.
YOU KNOW, I THINK THE BATMAN MAY HAVE ACTUALLY SHOCKED KENNY INTO GETTING HIS ACT TOGETHER.
YOU SHOULDA SEEN HIM, GREG. HE WAS INCRED-IBLE!
6


DELICATESSEN
WE GOT THE AREA SEALED OFF IN LESS THAN FIVE MINUTES.
THERE WAS NO WAY THOSE DOPERS WERE GOING TO SLIP OUT OF THIS SETUP...
...AND THEY KNEW IT.

THE HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR GAVE IT HIS BEST SHOT.
BUT HE WAS AS SUCCESSFUL AS YOU WERE WITH THAT JUMPER.

THE PUNKS WANTED $100,000 IN CASH AND A CADILLAC TO ESCAPE IN.

THEY CLAIMED THAT IF THEIR DEMANDS WEREN'T MET BY 9 O'CLOCK, THEY'D KILL A HOSTAGE.



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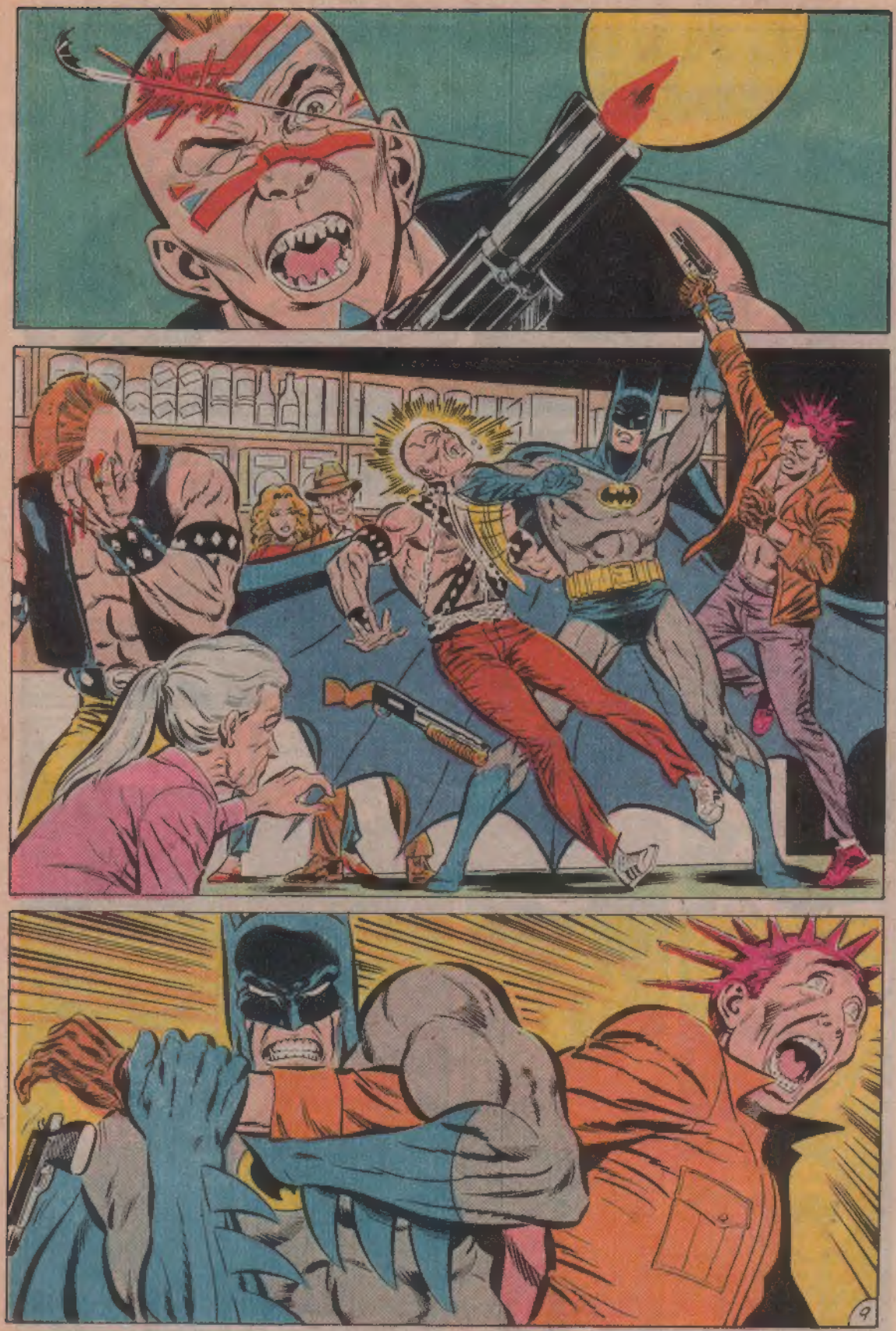
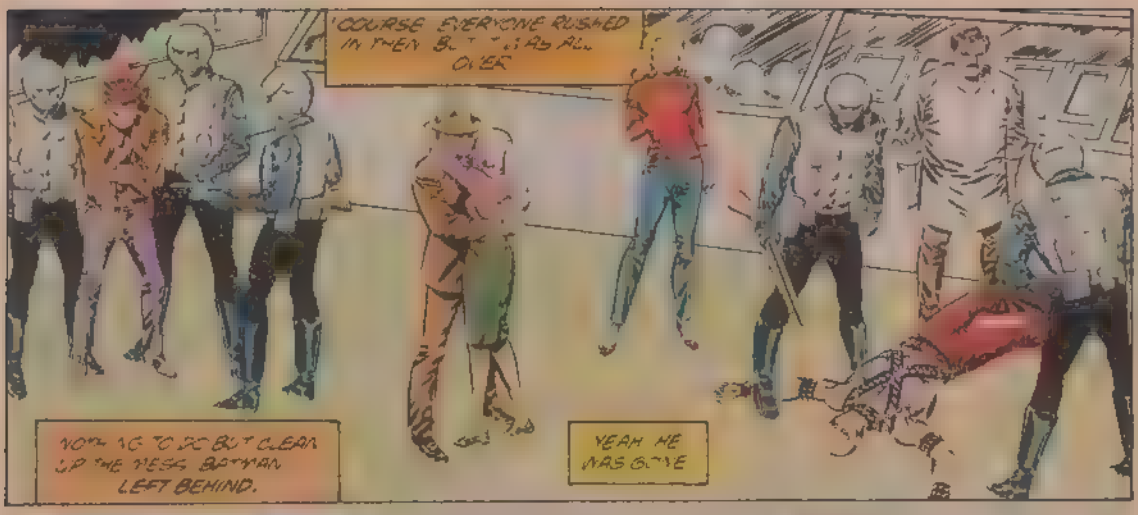
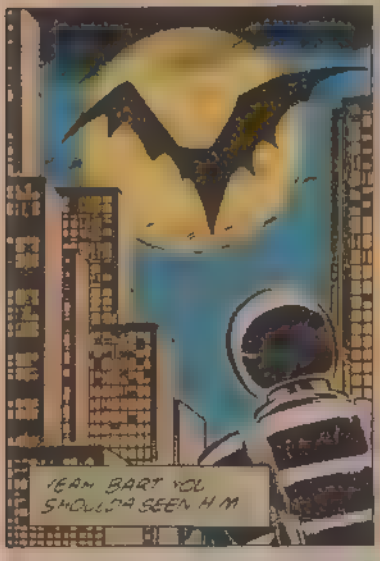


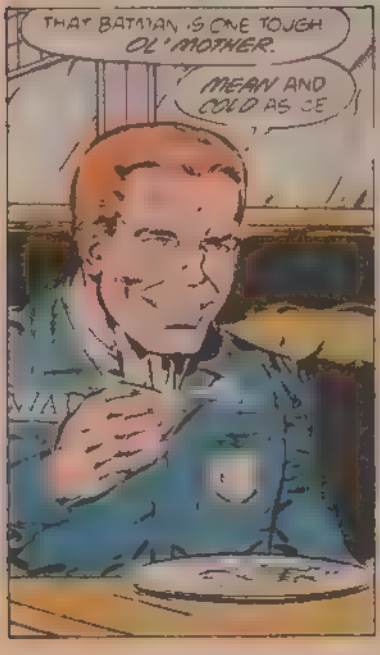
GET BACK, BATMAN!
I'LL BLOW HER HEAD OFF!
I SWEAR I WILL!
... AND I SWEAR THAT IF YOU HARM THAT WOMAN AT ALL, I'LL MAKE YOU PAY!
I WILL BREAK AND TWIST THINGS WITHIN YOU. YOU CAN'T CONCEIVE OF THE PAIN I CAN CAUSE
IT'S PAIN THAT WILL GO ON FOREVER. YOU WON'T ESCAPE IT...

...BECAUSE I WON'T LET YOU DIE!
NO!
KLEEEASSH!


'COURSE EVERYONE RUSHED IN THEN B-T-; BY ALL OVER
NOTH'G TO DO BUT CLEAN UP THE MESS BATMAN LEFT BEHIND.
YEAH HE WAS GONE


YEAH BART YOU SHOULDA SEEN H M

HE REALLY KICKED SOME TAIL!
I TELL YA, HE WENT THROUGH THEM LIKE A CHAIN SAW!


THAT BATMAN IS ONE TOUGH OL' MOTHER.
MEAN AND COLD AS ICE

NO HE S NOT
HUH ?
SAY WHAT ?

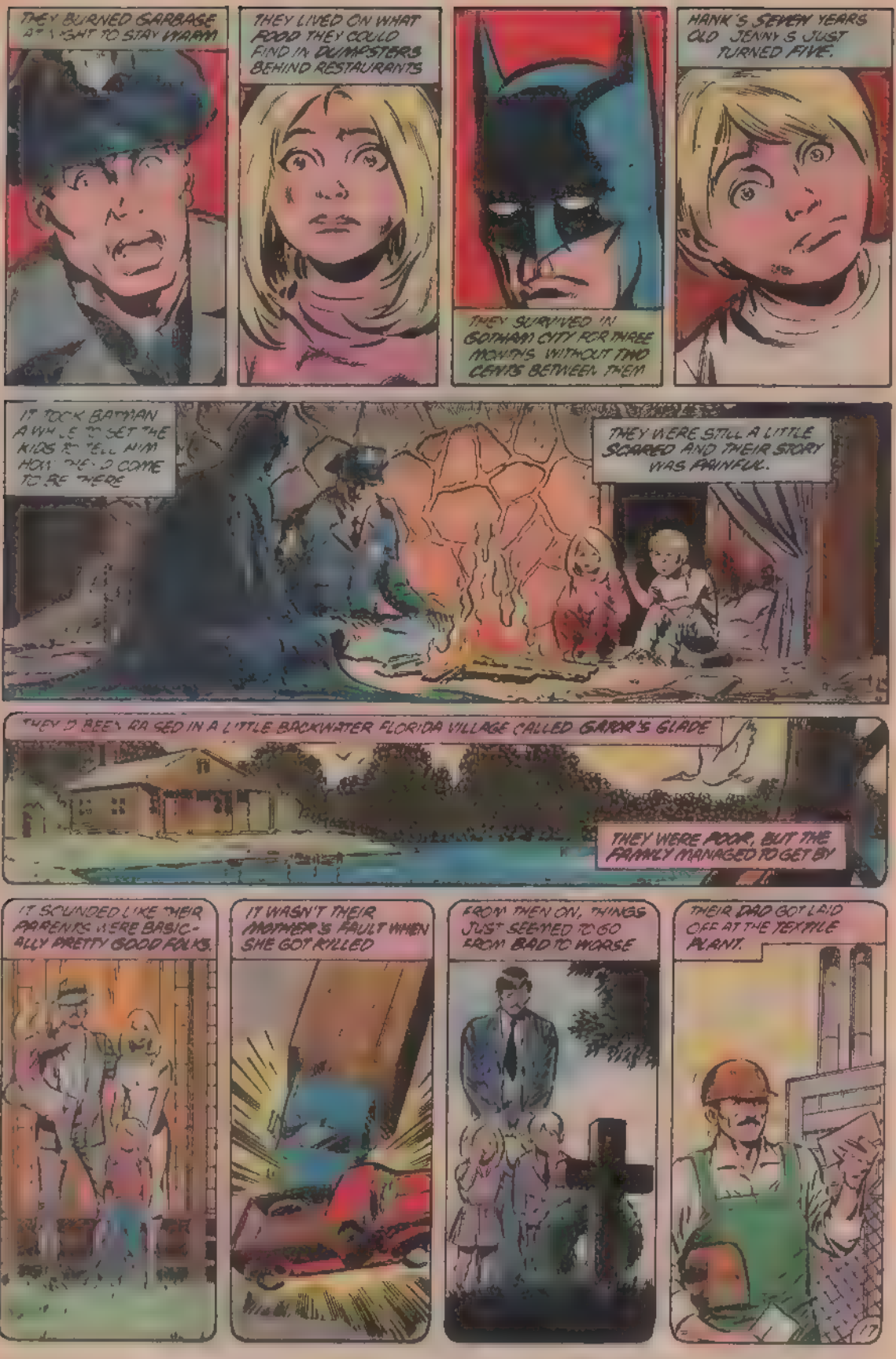
SORRY TO INTERRUPT YOUR CONVERSATION. MY NAME S JACKSON KIRBY JACKSON
I RAN NTO BATMAN TONIGHT MYSELF

BUT I GOT A COMPLETELY DIFFERENT IMPRESSION OF THE MAN THAN EITHER OF YOU DID
HAVE A SEAT
YEAH, TELL US ABOUT IT.
IT WAS JUST A LITTLE BEFORE FIVE THIS MORNING I WAS PATROLLING DOWN BY THE DOCKS.
THAT'S WHEN I SPOTTED THEM, JUST KIDS. COULDN'T FIGURE WHAT THEY WERE DOING OUT SO LATE, DOWN IN THE WAREHOUSE DISTRICT
THEY TOOK OFF AS SOON AS THEY REALIZED I'D SPOTTED THEM
FIGURED I COULD CATCH THEM ON FOOT, SO I CHASED AFTER THEM
I WAS WRONG
THEY WERE FAST
FAST AND AGILE
THEY KNEW THE TERRITORY, TOO
3

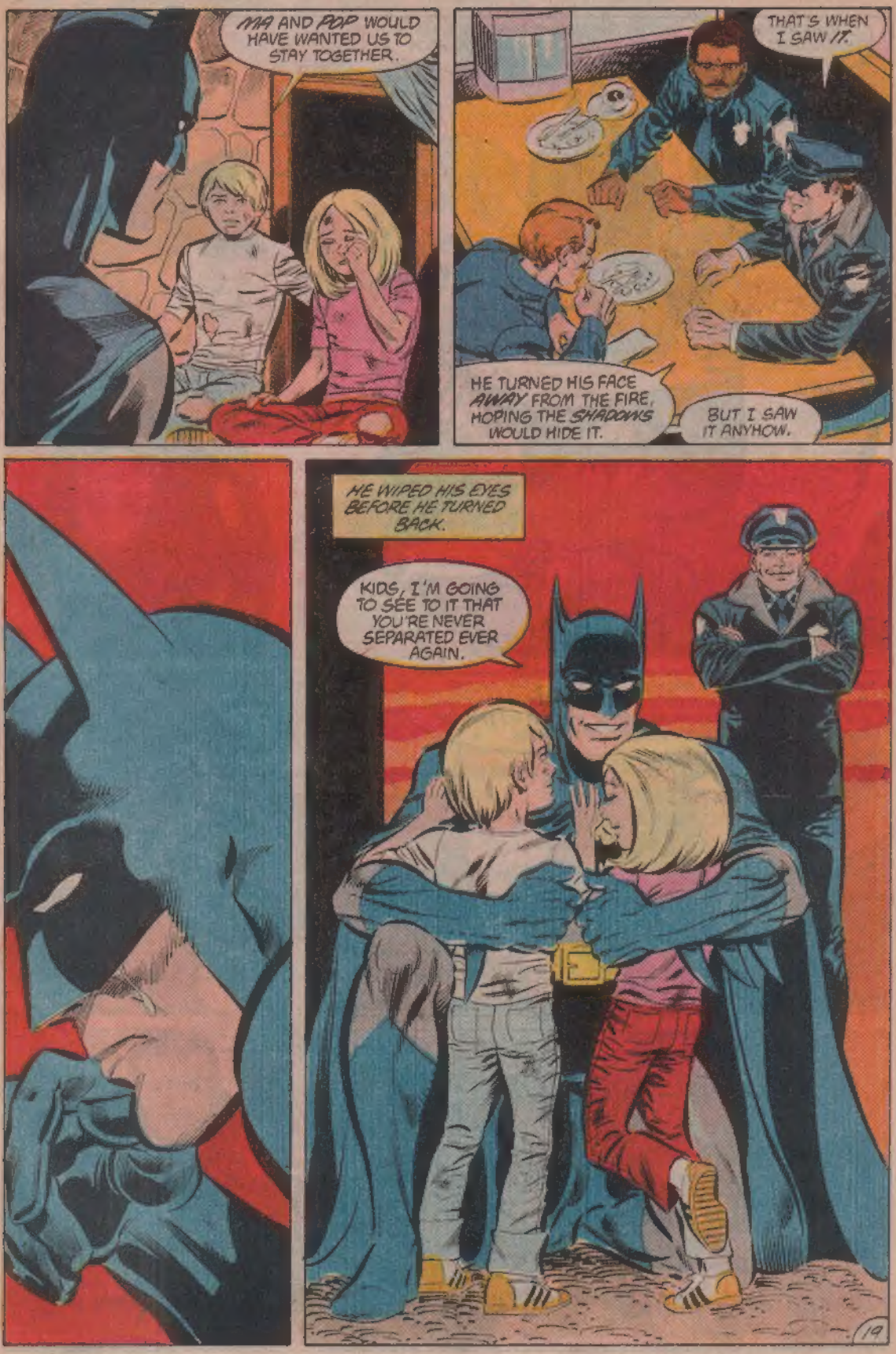
OUT A LITTLE LATE, AREN'T WE ?

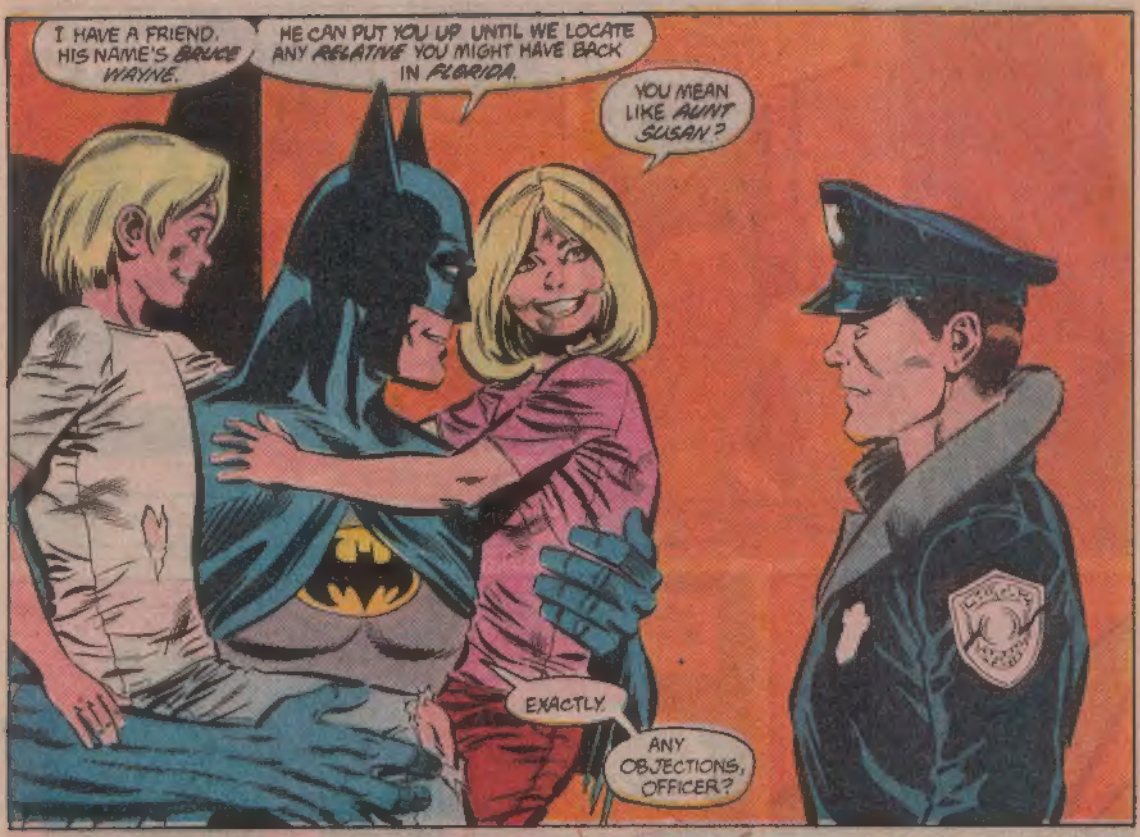
I'D NEVER HAVE CAUGHT UP WITH THEM, IF THE BATMAN HADN'T SHOVED UP
I GUESS BOTH BATMAN AND ME CORNERING THEM LIKE THAT KIND OF SPOOKED THE LITTLE BOY
STAY AWAY FROM US!
WE AIN'T GOING BACK!
YOU CAN'T MAKE US!
5

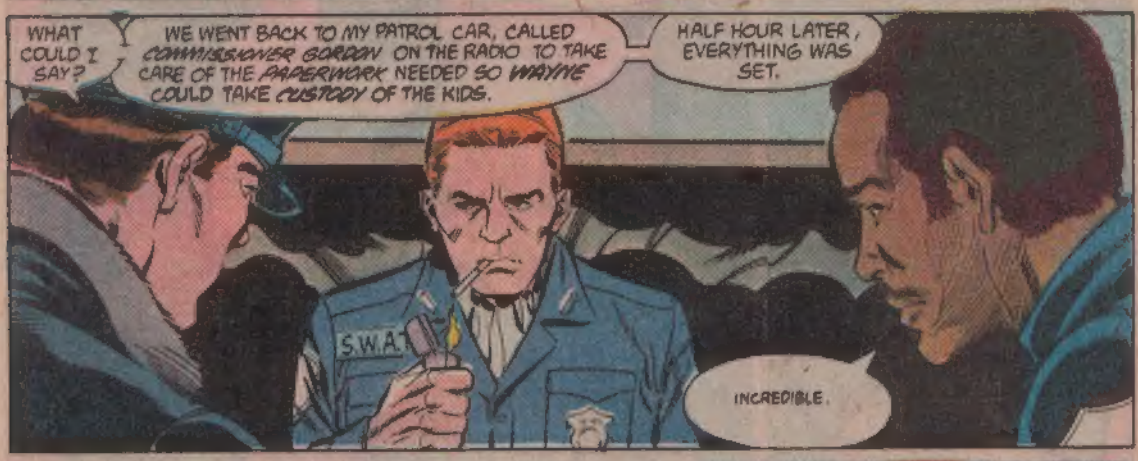
I'D NEVER MET BATMAN BEFORE TONIGHT, BUT I'D HEARD ALL THE STORIES ABOUT... YOU KNOW... HOW VIOLENT HE COULD GET.
I WASN'T SURE WHAT HE'D DO
I WAS KIND OF AFRAID FOR THE KIDS
CAN WE TALK ABOUT THIS?
HE KNEW JUST WHAT TO SAY TO PUT THEM AT EASE
I FIGURED THEY WERE A COUPLE OF RUNAWAYS
ONCE AGAIN, I WAS WRONG
BATMAN FINALLY CONVINCED THEM TO SHOW HIM WHERE THEY LIVED
THEIR HOME WAS A PACKING CRATE UNDER THE WEST SIDE HIGHWAY
I COULDN'T BELIEVE IT.


THEY BURNED GARBAGE AT NIGHT TO STAY WARM
THEY LIVED ON WHAT FOOD THEY COULD FIND IN DUMPSTERS BEHIND RESTAURANTS
THEY SURVIVED IN GOTHAM CITY FOR THREE MONTHS WITHOUT TWO CENTS BETWEEN THEM
HANK'S SEVEN YEARS OLD JENNY'S JUST TURNED FIVE.
IT TOOK BATMAN AWHILE TO GET THE KIDS TO TELL HIM HOW THEY'D COME TO BE THERE
THEY WERE STILL A LITTLE SCARED AND THEIR STORY WAS PAINFUL.
THEY'D BEEN RAISED IN A LITTLE BACKWATER FLORIDA VILLAGE CALLED GAROR'S GLADE
THEY WERE POOR, BUT THE FAMILY MANAGED TO GET BY
IT SOUNDED LIKE THEIR PARENTS WERE BASICALLY PRETTY GOOD FOLKS.
IT WASN'T THEIR MOTHER'S FAULT WHEN SHE GOT KILLED
FROM THEN ON, THINGS JUST SEEMED TO GO FROM BAD TO WORSE
THEIR DAD GOT LAID OFF AT THE TEXTILE PLANT.

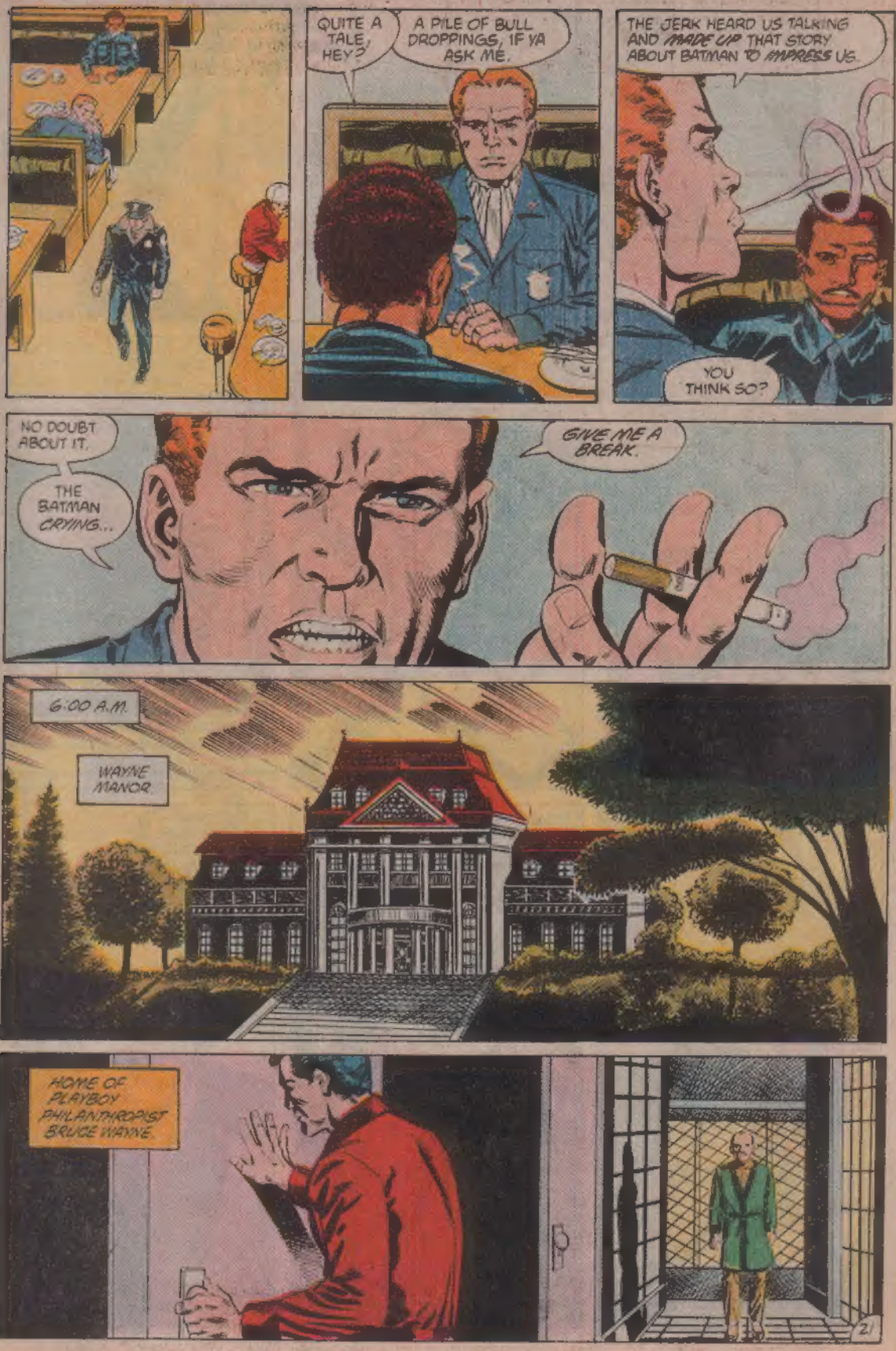
THE R FATHER HEARD THERE WAS WORK N GOTHAM SO THEY BROKE UP AND HEADED NORTH
GOTHAM C TY
BUT WHEN THEY GOT HERE THEY DISCOVERED THERE WERE MORE PEOPLE LOOKING FOR JOBS THAN JOBS
UNEMPLOY
THEN ONE NIGHT MR PARKINS GOT INTO A POKER GAME HOPING TO WIN ENOUGH MONEY TO GET THEM BACK TO FLORIDA
SOMEWHERE TO SOMEONE GOT CAUGHT CHEATING, THERE WAS A FIGHT. AND THEIR FATHER ENDED UP WITH A KNIFE IN HIS HEART
SOME SOCIAL WORKER FOUND THEM A COUPLE OF DAYS LATER SHE SAID SHE'D TAKE THEM TO A HOME
THE ONLY TROUBLE WAS, THEY COULDN'T GO TO THE SAME HOME
MARK HAD TO GO TO A BOYS HOME JEN TO A GIRLS
THE KIDS DIDN'T LIKE THAT IDEA, SO THEY SPLIT. THEY'D BEEN ON THE STREETS EVER SINCE
JENNY AND ME'S FAMILY
SHE NEEDS ME
NO ONE'S GOING TO PART US


MA AND POP WOULD HAVE WANTED US TO STAY TOGETHER.
THAT'S WHEN I SAW IT.
HE TURNED HIS FACE AWAY FROM THE FIRE, HOPING THE SHADOWS WOULD HIDE IT.
BUT I SAW IT ANYHOW.
HE WIPED HIS EYES BEFORE HE TURNED BACK.
KIDS, I'M GOING TO SEE TO IT THAT YOU'RE NEVER SEPARATED EVER AGAIN.
19


I HAVE A FRIEND. HIS NAME'S BRUCE WAYNE.
HE CAN PUT YOU UP UNTIL WE LOCATE ANY RELATIVE YOU MIGHT HAVE BACK IN FLORIDA.
YOU MEAN LIKE AUNT SUSAN?
EXACTLY.
ANY OBJECTIONS, OFFICER?


WHAT COULD I SAY?
WE WENT BACK TO MY PATROL CAR, CALLED COMMISSIONER GORDON ON THE RADIO TO TAKE CARE OF THE PAPERWORK NEEDED SO WAYNE COULD TAKE CUSTODY OF THE KIDS.
HALF HOUR LATER, EVERYTHING WAS SET.
S.W.A.T.
INCREDIBLE.

THOUGHT YOU MIGHT BE INTERESTED IN HEARING THE STORY.
GOTTA RUN. WIFE NEEDS A RIDE TO WORK.
SEE YA AROUND.
TAKE CARE...


QUITE A TALE, HEY?
A PILE OF BULL DROPPINGS, IF YA ASK ME.
THE JERK HEARD US TALKING AND MADE UP THAT STORY ABOUT BATMAN TO IMPRESS US.
YOU THINK SO?
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT.
THE BATMAN CRYING...
GIVE ME A BREAK.
6:00 A.M.
WAYNE MANOR
HOME OF PLAYBOY PHILANTHROPIST BRUCE WAYNE.
21

I TRUST NOTHING HAS CHANGED SINCE THE LAST TIME YOU CHECKED ON THEM...
...FIVE MINUTES AGO.
THEY'RE STILL SOUND ASLEEP.

I'LL BEGIN MY INQUIRIES FOR AUNT SUSAN THIS AFTERNOON.
I APPRECIATE YOU HELPING ME LOCATE THEIR RELATIVES, ALFRED.

ALL PART OF THE JOB, SIR.
BUT I DO FIND IT A BIT DISCONCERTING...I'M USED TO YOU COMING HOME WITH BULLET HOLES AND BRUISES, NOT WAYWARD CHILDREN.

LIKE YOU SAID, ALFRED. IT'S ALL PART OF THE JOB.
REALLY...

THE AVENGING DARK KNIGHT OF GOTHAM ISN'T GOING SOFT ON US, IS HE?
MAYBE JUST A LITTLE...

...BUT NOT ENOUGH FOR ANYONE BUT YOU TO NOTICE.
END